

siderations of justice or injustice, of mercy or cruelty, of praise or ignominy; but, putting all else aside, we must adopt whatever course will save its existence and preserve its liberty/' In that case a Louvois, in turning the Palatinate into a desert, was a meritorious statesman, although all mankind condemns the deed. And certainly any one who would to-day conduct a war on this principle would be decried as a monster. We have learned some things, even from history, since Machiavelli wrote, and among them we have learned that the barbarous methods of mediaeval and ancient times are not sacred canons of statesmanship binding on posterity. We will hardly go the length of selling our souls, as Machiavelli insists, even for our country.

While republican in sympathy, Machiavelli has evidently lost all hope of regenerating Italy by means of the republican form of government. Corruption is so rampant that nothing but the strong, unscrupulous arm of the absolute ruler can avail to deal effectively with it. It is difficult to maintain the republic in a corrupt city, impossible to recreate it. It may be the best form in a country like Switzerland, and he is unstinted in his admiration of the strong military confederacy that flourished among the Alps, and had retained its simplicity and freedom unalloyed by the corruption of its neighbours. Machiavelli represents in fact the reaction against republicanism as practised in Italy, and is driven by force of facts, especially in the "Prince," to "advocate the strong monarchy, on the model of France or Spain, as the only panacea for the ills of Italy. The strong man alone can make of Italy a nation, though he opines that in those parts in which feudalism has been crushed there is still such a spirit of equality that any sagacious man, with some knowledge of the ancient civilisations, could easily introduce free institutions, if only he would appear. But, as he will not appear, there is no hope but in an adventurer like Caesar Borgia, who will not shrink from all the excesses required by the situation. It is a terrible commentary on the miserable state of Italy that Machiavelli can only find its regenerator in a Borgia. He may be pardoned if he is inclined, in view of this state of things, to throw his republican creed overboard, as far as Italy is concerned. The republic, in Italy at any rate, will never establish a united